

Prabuddha Bharata

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Awakened India



जतिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वराधिबोधत ।

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Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराणि बोधत ।

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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. XXIII]

JANUARY 1918

[No. 258

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[*Translated from Bengali.*]

XII.

[Place :—*Balaram Babu's Residence, Calcutta.*

Year : 1898.

Subjects: *Guru Govind Sing's initiation of disciples.—He inspired a feeling of common interest into the popular mind in the Punjab.—The evil of psychic powers.—Two strange anecdotes in point in Swamiji's life.—His teaching to the disciple: "By constantly thinking of ghosts, one becomes a ghost oneself, while by constantly thinking of one's being the eternal, the free, the self-illuminated Atman, one becomes the knower of Brahman."*

Swamiji had been staying during the last two days at Balaram Babu's residence at Baghbazar. So it was a great opportunity for the disciple, who was paying a daily visit. On the day in question, Swamiji was taking a short stroll on the roof of the house, and the disciple with four or five others was in attendance. There was in those days a great wave of heat, and Swamiji's body was partly bare. While walking to and fro, Swamiji took up the story of Guru Govind Sing, and with his great eloquence touched upon the various points in his life,—how the revival of the Sikh race was brought about out of his

great renunciation, his great austerities, his fortitude, his life-consecrating labours,—how by his initiation he re-Hinduised converts into Islam and took them back into the Sikh community,—and how by the banks of the Nerbudda he brought his wonderful life to a close. Speaking of the great power that used to be infused in those days into the initiates of Guru Govind, Swamiji recited a *dohá* (couplet) the Sikhs have popularised among themselves :

सर्वैया लाख पर एक चढाउँ
जब गुरुगोविन्द नाम सुनाउँ ।

That is,—when Guru Govind gives the Name, i. e., the initiation, a single man waxes strong to triumph over a lakh and a quarter of his foes. Accepting initiation from Guru Govind, and thereby deriving from his inspiration a real spiritual devotion, each of his disciples had his soul filled with such wonderful heroism that single-handed he could defeat a lakh and a quarter of his foes. While holding forth thus on the glories of religion, Swamiji's eyes dilating with enthusiasm seemed to be emitting fire, and his hearers, dumb-stricken and looking at his face, kept watching the wonderful sight. What miraculous force and enthusiasm dwelt there in Swamiji's heart! Whatever the subject he would speak upon, his absorption into it at the time would be so complete that his hearers took him to be extolling its importance above that of all other subjects on earth and establishing it as the very goal of human achievement!

After a while, the disciple said, "But, Sir, it's very strange indeed that Guru Govind could unite both Hindus and Mussalmans within the fold of his religion and lead them both towards the same end. In Indian history, no other example of this can be found indeed."

Swamiji.— Men can't be united by any bond of unity unless there is common interest. People can never be united merely by getting up meetings, societies and lectures, if their interest is not one and the same. Guru Govind made it understood everywhere that the men of his age, be they Hindus or Mussalmans, were living under a regime of profound injustice and oppression. He did not create any common interest, he only pointed it out to the masses. And so both Hindus and Mussalmans followed him. He was a great worshipper of Shakti. Yes, in Indian history, such an example is indeed very rare.

Finding, then, that it was getting late

into the night, Swamiji came down with others into the parlour on the first floor. On his taking his seat there, others established themselves around him almost in a circle, and conversation went on on the subject of miracles.

Swamiji said, "Fairly by some little degree of mental concentration it is possible to acquire these powers"; and turning to the disciple he asked, "Well, do you like to learn thought-reading? It can be taught to you in four or five days."

Disciple.— Of what avail would it be to me, Sir?

Swamiji.— Why, you will be able to know others' minds?

Disciple.— But will that help my attainment of the knowledge of Brahman?

Swamiji.— Not a bit.

Disciple.— Then, there's no need of my learning that science. But, Sir, we would very much like to hear about what you have yourself seen of the manifestation of such psychic powers.

Swamiji.— Once when travelling in the Himalayas I had to take up my abode for a night in a village of the hill people. Hearing the beating of drums in the village sometime after nightfall, I came to know from enquiring of the house-owner that one of the villagers had been possessed by a Devatá or good spirit. To meet the house-owner's importunate wishes and to satisfy my own curiosity, we went out to see what the matter really was. Reaching the spot, I found a great concourse of people and I was told, a tall man with long, bushy hair being pointed out to me, that the person had got the Devatâ on him. I noticed an axe being heated in fire close by the man, and after a while, I found the red-hot thing seized off and applied to parts of his body and also to his hair! But wonder of wonders, no part of his

body or hair thus branded with the red-hot axe was found to be burnt, and there was no expression of any pain in his face! I stood mute with surprise. The headman of the village, meanwhile, came up to me and said, "Maharaj, please do exorcise this man out of your mercy." I felt myself in a nice fix, but moved to do something, I had to go near the possessed man. Once there, I felt a strong impulse to examine the axe rather closely, but the instant I touched it, I burnt my fingers, although the thing had then cooled down to blackness. The smarting made me distracted, and all my theories about the axe phenomenon were spirited away from my mind! However, smarting with the burn, I placed my hand on the head of the man and repeated for a short while the *Japam*. As a funny matter of surprise, the man came round in ten or twelve minutes. Then, oh the gushing reverence the villagers evinced for me! I was taken to be some Jupiter or Apollo! But, all the same, I couldn't make any head or tail of the whole business. So without a word one way or the other I returned with my host to his hut. It was about midnight at that time, and I went to bed. But what with the smarting burn in the hand and the impenetrable puzzle of the whole affair, I couldn't have any sleep that night. Thinking of the burning axe failing to harm living human flesh, it occurred again and again to my mind, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Disciple.— But, could you later on ever explain the mystery, Sir, in your mind?

Swamiji.— No. The event came back to me in passing just now, and so I related it to you.

Presently Swamiji resumed his talk, "But Thakur used to disparage these supernatural powers; his teaching was that 'one cannot attain to the Supreme Truth if the mind is diverted to the manifestation of these powers.'

The human mind, however, is so weak,—not to speak of householders, even ninety per cent. of the Sadhus happen to be votaries of these powers. In the West, men are lost in wonderment if they come across these tricks. It is only because Thakur has mercifully made us understand the evil of these powers as being hindrances to real spirituality that we are able to take them at their proper value. Haven't you noticed how for that reason the children of Sri Ramakrishna pay no heed to them?"

Swami Yogananda said to Swamiji at the time, "Well, please, narrate to our *Bāṅglā** that anecdote of yours in Madras when you met the famous ghost-tamer."

The disciple had not heard of the anecdote before. So he greatly pressed Swamiji to relate it to him, and Swamiji was persuaded to give the following account of his experience:

Once while I was putting up at Manmatha Babu's† place, I dreamt one night that my mother had died. My mind became much distracted, and what to speak of corresponding with anybody at home, I used to send no letters in those days even to our Math. The dream being disclosed to Manmatha, he sent a wire to Calcutta to ascertain facts about the matter. For, the dream made my mind uneasy on one hand and on the other our Madras friends with all arrangements ready, were insisting on my departing for America immediately, and I felt rather unwilling to leave before getting any news of my mother. So Manmatha who discerned this state of my mind suggested our repairing to a man living some way off from town who having

* i. e., the disciple, fondly so-called because of his hailing from East Bengal.

† Babu Manmatha Nath Bhattacharya, M. A., son of the well-known Calcutta Pundit and College Principal, Mahamahopadhyaya Pundit Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna.

acquired mystic powers over spirits could tell fortunes and read the past and the future of a man's life. So at Manmatha's request and to get rid of my mental suspense, I agreed to go to this man. Covering the distance partly by railway and partly on foot, we four of us,—Manmatha, Alasingha, myself and another—managed to reach the place, and what met our eyes there was a man with a ghoulish, haggard, soot-black look, sitting close to a cremation ground. His emissaries used some nasal jargon of Madrassi dialect to point out to us this man of perfected powers over ghosts. At first the mystic took absolutely no notice of us, and then, when we were about to retire from the place, he made a request for us to wait. Our Alasingha was acting as the interpreter and he explained the request to us. Next, the man commenced drawing some figures with a pencil, and presently, I found him getting perfectly stiff all over in mental concentration. Then he began to give out my name, my genealogy, the history of my long line of forefathers and said that Thakur was keeping close to me all through my wanderings, intimating also to me good news about my mother. He also foretold that I would have to go very soon to far-off lands for preaching about religion. Getting good news thus about my mother, we all travelled back to town, and after arrival there received by wire the assurance of mother's doing well.

Turning to Swami Yogananda, Swamiji remarked that all that the man had foretold came to be fulfilled to the letter, call it all some fortuitous concurrence or anything else.

Swami Yogananda said in reply, "But then, you didn't use to believe all this before, and so the experience was ordained as necessary for you."

Swamiji.— Well, I am not a fool to believe anything and everything without direct, practical proof. And coming into this realm

of Mahamaya, oh the many magic mysteries I have been given to come across alongside this magic conjuration of a universe! Maya, oh Maya! Goodness! What riff-raff we have been taking so long this day! By thinking constantly of ghosts, men become ghosts themselves, while whoever repeats day and night, with or without understanding of the meaning,—“I am the eternal, the pure, the free, the self-illuminated Atman,”—verily he becomes ‘the knower of Brahman.’

Saying this, Swamiji affectionately turned to the disciple and said, “Don't allow all that worthless nonsense to occupy your mind. Keep up alone the discrimination between the real and the unreal and devote yourself heart and soul to the attempt to realise the Atman. There is nothing higher than this knowledge of the Atman; all else is Maya, mere jugglery. The Self-revealed Atman is the one Inalienable Truth. This I have come to understand, and this is why I try to make it understood by you all. एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्म नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन,—One Brahman there is without a second, there is nothing manifold in existence.

All this conversation continued up to 11 o'clock at night. After that, his meal being finished, Swamiji retired for rest. The disciple bowed down at his feet to bid him goodbye. Swamiji asked, “Are you not coming to-morrow?”

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, I am coming, to be sure. The mind longs so much to meet you at least once before the day is out.

Swamiji.— So farewell now, it is getting very late.

Brooding over all that Swamiji had said, the disciple returned home at midnight.



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

GREETINGS to all our readers for the New Year, 1918, which announces itself in the midst of events on the arena of the world, of which the complicated processes of unfoldment exercise the human mind as never before was it exercised perhaps in the whole history of mankind. Apart from obscure motives, in the speech, of gilding up undemocratic pills of war diplomacy for a so-called democracy, what the great spokesman of a great nation said the other day is indeed no exaggeration: "The supreme moment of history has come" and "the hand of God is laid upon nations."

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ—
 "The afflicted one, the enquiring soul, the man of some desire and the wise one, oh mightiest descendant of Bharata" constitute the four types of men who are found to seek after God, so says the Gita. The striking phenomenon of "war religiousness," as it has been aptly termed, is easily explained, if we remember these words of Sri Krishna. The crowned and uncrowned anarchs of the world-war, from their high pedestals to-day, take oftener than ever the name of God, because now more than ever they are *artharthīs*, men intent upon some end in view which they feel very deeply they cannot do without. And the remarkable swell in the church-going population in the countries at war, a phenomenon, which, observers aver, faded back, however, after the first period of the war, to its old normal dimensions, like some of the blazing stars, may safely be set down to the fact that people in these countries naturally wanted to overpower by some sort of faith in God the large element of *affliction* involved in sacrifices they were worked up to make on all sides.

But all this temporary pious effervescence does not form any index to those mighty changes towards which the world-convulsing events must be ultimately working. Neither do the many high-sounding statements of ultimate issues in the war, blared forth pompously to the world by leaders of nations thrown headlong into the terrible frenzy of the present war, help us in any measure to unravel the real ultimate purpose and trend of events. The whole civilisation of the West has been flung into a Cyclopean crucible wherefrom it may emerge either essentially mended or practically ended. Its fate is trembling in the balance, and the real ultimate point at issue is not the righteous hegemony of England or the unrighteous hegemony of Germany among nations, but the regeneration or the dissolution of this mechanistic civilisation of the West. The great epoch of Machines in the history of man is playing itself out on the battlefields of Europe, through rivers of blood, through clouds of fumes, through terrible scenes of desolation on land and water.

For it was the power of the Machine which nursed the modern age into being, which brought it up and gave it a culture and a world-dominion. It was a great force, this Machine-power, no doubt; it gave man in every field of his activity the shortest cut to organisation. In the domain of matter, it enabled men to manipulate big forces and masses, to shorten time and distance, to produce through few hands the work of multitudes. But in all this organisation in the sphere of material forces, Machine-power did not necessarily or directly encroach upon the province of the self-mastery of human will; it did not necessarily involve any mechanisation of human will. Lust of wealth, of course, bent on

an over-production of commercial commodities, drove an undue excess of human labour away from rural fields and homes, where alone has to be laid the corner-stone of all social poise and stability, and thus created new economic and social perplexities. But so long as Machine-power has its scope confined within the domain of matter and is free from the touch of human selfishness or greed, it may not turn out to be an evil in itself. If on the other hand, for the sake of organisation among human units, this Machine-power *in principle* is introduced into the domain of the human will, if the human mind and its forces on the analogy of matter and its forces are sought to be *mechanised* in the interest of organised work, a steady, wholesale degradation of human life becomes the inevitable consequence.

The temptation to use Machine-power in all provinces of life is great indeed. If I have a machine to get some physical work done, I am assured of precision and efficiency while saving much labour and worry. And a machine is something which gives me an easy control over material forces and units. Similarly, if there is some machine or device which can give me power and control over human units and forces, I naturally think very highly of the advantage, for I can then get human work done through that machine or device and save at the same time much labour and worry. Now this great advantage of applying Machine-power over human materials became known to men, long, long ago in human history. The state in the West, for instance, enjoyed this advantage in the name of its right to make laws for the people, provided, of course, that the state had power enough behind itself to enforce these laws. This power of the state, therefore, when joined to its right of legislation, constituted a machine or device by which an efficient kind of mechanical control could be exercised over multitudes of men so as to get out of them some

desired kind of work. But the early types of state-machine proved too crude, for the gulf between those who mainly worked the machine and those who were mainly worked by the machine could not be long maintained and the state-machine had gradually to be perfected to the end that this gulf or distinction might be more and more minimised. Thus we arrive at the perfection of the modern state-machine.

In the most modern state, those who work the machine belong to those worked by the machine in the sense of being men of their choice and appointment, and so the modern people allow themselves to be worked by a machine of which the machine-men are chosen by themselves. The advantage accruing to their collective life is the maximum of mechanical efficiency with a minimum of self-determination on the part of the many human units. These latter have to depend on the state-machine to have their interests, needs and means of life looked after, to have all their rights protected and new ways of improvement devised. But in return for all this that they can claim as their due from the machine, they must submit to its working now and for ever, provided it is worked by men on whom the majority among them put their trust. Evidently the very backbone of this give-and-take system of life is the state-machine and its efficiency, and the vital necessity of maintaining both is paramount over all the necessities of life, individual and collective. So those who are returned to office and work the machine must deem it, when once there, to be their most solemn duty to the country to keep the machine growing in power and puissance among all the competing state-machines of the world, for the standard of state efficiency is constantly rising among nations expanding in power and wealth. In the rise of the modern states, therefore, and in their feverish career of competition for wealth and power, we really

read the story of how man's liking for the machine made him build life on the model thereof and then committed him to the mad course of subordinating everything in life to the enhancement of mechanical power enjoyable in life individually and collectively.

Thus the underlying principle in European nationalism is the principle of the machine, and European nationalism is the very pivot and the lever of the whole modern civilisation of the West. We have characterised this civilisation, therefore, in one word as mechanistic. But it may be objected that when the people of a country submit in the manner of a Western nation to the working of a centralised state, this submission does not amount to submitting to a machine, for they do so out of their free will, and the operations of a state also cannot be called mechanical inasmuch as they proceed from deliberations. The reply is that human beings have no right to part with, even by way of delegation or trust, the individual power and initiative of working out their own good, and in proportion as they do so they tend to dehumanise themselves. Man is endowed with a mind and will by which he is to determine and work out his good, that is, his duty to himself and to others. This sense of duty is the very foundation of his manhood, and unless all the work that is got out of him is got directly out of his sense of duty freely determining what to do and why, his very manhood is suppressed and set at naught. So the respect for this manhood of man, this self-determining power of human will as manifesting itself through his sense of duty, must form the very centre of every system of polity, and all the motive force in the system must be derived from this self-determination of the individual. This right of individual self-determination is usurped in the European political system by the state which by legislation determines and works out all the life that individuals have to live as units of the

nation. The individual's consent to such usurpation may be an act of free-will, but he has no such right against himself of consent in the matter; and though the usurpation may be of the nature of a substitution of determination through representatives for individual self-determination, such substitution destroys the very fundamental right of the human will to determine itself.

And whenever man suffers his will or moral sense to be determined, even on trust, by others, his will becomes prey to a machine; it tends to be mechanised, instead of being self-disciplined. It may be pleaded in palliation of a mechanistic polity that the deliberations and determinations of a central state are always open to intelligent endorsement and appreciation by the people of a country and, therefore, they eventually amount to being self-determinations of the popular will. But why should the people remain contented with this mere second-hand exercise of their will or moral sense at every step? Is it not because the fundamental assumption has been made by all parties that the state-machine arrangement must be maintained as being of paramount, inevitable necessity? If once it is taken for granted that the country cannot live or do without this arrangement, then it becomes a virtue on the part of the people to suffer their own ethical initiative in all matters to be superseded by state-management from above their heads. Our point is that this supersession of individual initiative in matters of individual well-being serves to mechanise the individual will, and so the system which makes it a virtue is fraught with the profoundest evil for man. Why set up a system at all which must ensure mechanical efficiency and precision in collective action by mechanising the feelings and volitions of the people at large? Why should men feel, will or act at the *dictation* of others, however representative in character, simply on the plea that otherwise your blessed machine of political

organisation cannot be worked or maintained? Down with such a centralised machine if in the name of organisation it seeks to dwarf the real manhood of the individual, his divine right of self-determination as to his duty to himself, to his fellow-beings and to his God!

And here lies the real crux of the whole problem. Cannot the organisation of life in a country be worked out on a moral, ethical basis instead of on a mechanical basis? Cannot the ethical consciousness of the individual be so trained up that he will unerringly tend to make his own contribution through all the individual affairs of his life to the sum-total of national activity, out of his deep sense of a moral, or more practically speaking, a religious imperativeness? Or in one word, cannot the *dharma* of the individual be so developed within him that he will freely do his national duty from his station of life without the necessity of being handled as a machine from above in all matters of national well-being by state-initiative or legislative coercion whose sting is sought to be blunted in vain by an artificial system of delegation? For if the principle is to let the people of a country govern themselves, the self-determining activities of the individual wills can only be disciplined into some sort of national uniformity, but they never admit of being manipulated and transformed into the unity of some centralised state-function. The individual freedom in self-government necessarily involves a system of diffused polity, and can never be maintained if a centralisation of determinative activity is sought for beyond the individuality of the individual. This is the indispensable implication of self-government and democracy. No real democracy can live without a diffused system of polity in which the national self-determination essentially takes place not in the council-chambers but in the individual walks of life, in the diffused haunts of the individual.

Take up this Individual therefore as the pivot, the centre of national organisation. Let him develop his *dharma*, the spiritual light of his self-determining faculty, with the perpetual aid of a system of training diffused all over the country through religious institutions that pervade the whole of his life with their inspiration. Let him thus find out his duty, his place, his importance in the national life, and then while he lives and works to build up and maintain it, let there be the central government, essentially confined to protective and punitive functions, reaching out to needs and necessities calling for such functions through representative institutions among the people, keeping up their uniformity of life, representing its collectivity in dealings with other nations and strong with the strength of the people to defend, when necessary, their country's frontiers. Let thus the state-machine be a limb in the organism of the nation; the nation must be greater than the state. As a steward of the nation, studious of the purpose and tenour of its life, of the nature of its contributions to the life of humanity, gathering up the threads of its internal achievement and effort, sentinelling its interests and pursuits within the country and without, let the state in every country faithfully serve the democracy seeking to grow out to its full partnership in the one humanity on earth. This should be the proper subordinate place of state organisations in the evolution of man. But instead of this, the state has engulfed the man, the government has swallowed up the nation, organisation has crippled life into mechanical force, the body has killed the soul.

This enormous inequity on man and the deeper possibilities of his will has brought about the nemesis of a world-wide conflagration. This treacherous handing over of man's life of self-discipline to statecraft, this artful surrender of men's consciences into the hands of a mechanical apparatus which has no conscience of its own, being pre-eminently

the embodiment of material power, is the tremendous crime which is expiating itself in the tremendous fury of to-day's battles in the West. And as the states squeeze in their death-grips on the throats of their enemy states, they fling away all their democratic disguise and stolidly betray their cloven foot,—the insidious exploitation of the human will in the artificial interest of unlimited state-efficiency,—the crafty secularisation of the deepest forces of man's nature for the sake of winning in a feverish, artificial competition for growing state-power. For the refined covetousness of states for wealth and power has served to exaggerate politics to highly artificial proportions and contortions. This mealy-mouthed covetousness has made the portfolios of state-politics bloated and bulbous with endless artificial niceties of policy, procedure and programme. The ambitions of a common man of any country are rendered flexible by the lessons of life's experiences and contentment is one of his fundamental moods of life. He has, moreover, means within his inner nature to check brutal impulses of covetousness by a broader spirit of contentment. So if real democracy, based on the self-disciplined individual wills in the nation, is allowed to steer the course of its life in the world, covetousness can never become the tacit pivot of international politics creating never-ending problems of clever combination and competition, whereas contentment can never become anything like a force in the politics of state-machines, which by the very law of their being are committed to a competitive pursuit of wealth and power.

In real democracy, politics is bound to be simplified as an art, for it occupies there its normal position and function as the hand-maid to the collective higher culture of the nation seeking to join its distinctive note to the harmony of world-culture. We have already indicated what the politics of a state wielded purely in the interest a truly democratic nation means. Here it is sure to drop

off all the artificial excrescences of a refined policy of competitive covetousness together with all the unreal superfluities of procedure for exploiting the popular will in the interest of state-initiative in all national affairs. The decentralisation of this initiative naturally implies the transfer of manifold functions from politics to deeper and more diffused areas of human life. The very soul of the Western world is crying out for this disintegration of a spuriously exaggerated politics tyrannising over its life for centuries. The world-war is serving to show up its brutal evils and slowly the scales are bound to fall from the eyes of an intrinsically peace-loving humanity. Already the inalienably *human* elements of the nations are growing conscious of all being not well with the blind dehumanizing war-frenzy that feeds itself on hollow one-sided philosophising about lasting peace to be brought about by sowing seeds of future warfare through crushing defeat and towering victory,—by perpetuating invidiousness and jealousy among states! Men with a broad vision of human destiny higher than national ambitiousness are slowly working off the mechanisation of their will by state-management and are beginning to see beyond the loud pretensions of the war party.

These favourable signs visible almost in every country in the West are bound to develop into definite movements against the insidious tyranny of states over human life. This tyranny is really digging its own grave, as it did in Russia, by its frenzied prosecution of war, and the conflagration will never be extinguished before this tyranny is scalded down to exhaustion. Then the people in every country will rise to take possession of their own wills and discipline them by a new religious outlook on life into a new organisation of nationhood in which the state will fall back into its proper position as a retainer and bailiff, as it were, of the nation, waiting

upon its righteous efforts to prove faithful and useful to the greater life of humanity. The sooner therefore the proud states of the world abdicate and decentralise their ill-gotten power over human life and its destinies, the better for their future justifiable existence. Russia has risen against the great wrong, the atrocities of a mechanised state-control; she has flung down the idol from its pedestal. But Russia is still groping in the dark for a system of organisation that will base itself on the self-disciplined wills of men. She vaguely upholds the divinity of the individual will, but she knows not how that divinity is to be brought out as an organising principle welding together with its spiritual authority the many scattered institutions of the country into the integrity of national life. She has a vision of the gospel, but no discernment of the means of discipline which it creates. For it must be remembered that if *dharma* or a truly religious sense of duty, born of the uniform faith in a spiritual scheme of life, does not lay out for the human will its orbit of motion, if the individual has not the inspiration and training to move faithfully, in the language of Hindu polity, in the sphere of his *swadharma*s, readjusted, of course, whenever necessary, according to time, place and circumstance, his freedom and efficiency to work out a national life for his country becomes impossible, and blinded by the all too natural and animal instinct of insisting on his own rights, his conduct becomes erratic to a degree rendering all organisation of life impracticable.

Along with the disintegration of too much centralised government by states, therefore, a spiritual revival must take place in every country to modify the ill-disguised secularistic scheme of life to which collective consciousness has so long pledged itself. Men's duties in life must have to be sanctified by a religious imperativeness and sanction, and a transvaluation of all social values must take place making duty, and not right, the real

criterion and measure of worth. If in this way the human sense of duty does not become exalted to a greater degree of inviolability, if men do not come to feel of their own accord a greater obligation for self-discipline and self-sacrifice for the common good and in the interest of the national organisation, hardly any good can come out of the emancipation of human will from the mechanical control of centralised states. If the evil necessity of state-coercion is to be removed for ever and the state is to remain a weapon in men's hands for purely protective and punitive legislation, the men themselves must be trained to freely exercise their will at every step to the end that their conduct in life may redound to the good of the nation. A polity of life at home and in society which wonderfully tends to ensure such exercise of the individual will, was once the unique glory of the Indian people; and it is becoming more and more evident day by day, as problems of organising life on stable, lasting foundations are growing keen and perplexing all over the world, that India is bound to be called upon in the near future to interpret to the outside world in its own terms her own valuable experiences in working out institutions centred in the self-discipline of the individual will. But is India fully awakened yet to the reality and significance of her mission in the world and to the necessity it involves of reorganising first her own polity of national life as an object-lesson to the nations in the real self-government of a people *by* and *for* the people themselves, keeping up a central state for merely maintaining what they work out and as the defender of their life and mission on earth? Or is she still unfortunately under the shadow of the besetting sin of her Western-educated sons which consists in going crazy over Western institutions and principles which are already undergoing there the last throes of dissolution, or the agonies of a crucial trial that cannot but end in their wholesale modification?

THE REALM OF RELIGIOUS TRUTHS.

RO truth has been revealed in modern times more important in its bearing on modern religious thought than the insistent declaration of Swami Vivekananda: *Religion is realisation.*

For in consequence of the modern apotheosis of the intellect, the realm of religious truths came to be confined within the mere life of intellect and sentiment, and men of genius who could philosophise or poetize in a way to inspire confidence and admiration, were held up as best authority on religious truths.

But where does this realm of religious truths really lie? It cannot be co-terminous with the domain of intellect and sentiment, for the functions of the latter are absolutely dependent and pivoted on sense-experience. What gives reality to all our thinking and feeling is the basic reality of material facts from which they deduce abstract relations. However lofty, therefore, the soarings of intellect and sentiment, however abstract their renderings of relation between fact and fact, the real foundation on which they build is matter. Religion, on the other hand, pivots itself on the reality of the spirit. The real truth about religion, therefore, cannot be yielded by any manipulation of the abstractions and derivatives from our sense-experience.

To go a little deeper into the analysis, intellect and sentiment are awake primarily amidst facts of sensuous experience; and though their business is to soar beyond such facts on the wings of relating judgments, even the most transcendental relation established by them will be found after all to justify their reality by the inevitable reference to the reality of the starting-point, namely our sense-experience. Thus, if religion be but a matter of our intellect and sentiment, even our

thoughts and feelings about the spirit are bound to remain for ever only the derivatives from our cognition of matter, so that we could speak of the spirit only in the terms of matter.

The intellect functions under conditions of time, space and causation. It must always proceed by knitting together a *before* and an *after*, a *here* and a *there*, a cause producing an effect. So when it thinks of a God, it is bound to get up a time relation, a space relation and a cause-and-effect relation between God and the All of our sense-experience. God precedes, co-exists with and follows the evolving and dissolving world in time; He pervades all space, and produces as the cause the effect called creation. These relating judgments of the intellect may be reduced to very clever refinements, but however much refined, the intellect will persistently keep up two terms at least for the sake of its relating function, which it never surrenders so long as it is intellect. It is constitutionally impossible for it to shake off this inevitable residuum of dualism, the dualism of a God and something else to be related to Him.

If the intellect is thus limited by the conditions of its relating function, what guarantee is there that it can reveal to us ultimate truths? And although men are found to claim that they can feel more or deeper than they can think out, so long as there is any relating element in the contents of human feeling or sentiment, the latter must be admitted to be as much limited as the intellect. So why should we blindly extol philosophy or poetry to be the prophets of religious truths?

Religion is neither mere intellection, nor mere emotion. It is *realisation*. And the distinction implied by this word is very important. Let us examine it more closely.

Had religion been concerned merely with man's mental idealities, the subjective products of his ideation consisting of his thoughts and emotions, religion as realisation would purely have been a matter of intellect and sentiment. But religion speaks of objective truths or verities which are not of our own subjective making. So religion as realisation means the actual objective experience of such verities, and the process of such realisation cannot be equivalent to all the ordinary thinking and feeling which serve to keep us awake and alive to the world of sense and intellect. For instance, religion says that God exists. Now all our ordinary thinking and feeling which make us cognisant of the world of sense and intellect and enable us to take note of whatever exists in it, are of no avail in bringing us face to face with this God as He is spoken of in religion. To this intellect and sentiment He is a mere idea evoking pious thoughts and feelings. But God is no such mere idea to be manipulated and improved upon by subtle philosophy or soaring poetry. God is the central Fact in religion, and if this Fact is not accessible to sense and intellect by the side of all the manifold facts that go to make up the world of sense and intellect, the realisation of this Fact must presuppose a higher vision which is not the mere intellect or sentiment, and religion must be a matter of this higher vision, not of our intellect and sentiment.

But unfortunately what we find ourselves in this modern age almost invariably doing is to treat religion as a matter of intellect and sentiment. We merely think or feel about God in this way or that, and then rush forward to publish that purely intellectual or emotional experience as our contribution to modern religious thought. Thus a tremendous mass of religious literature is being brought forth which nowhere deals with God as anybody's realised experience, but everywhere treats of Him as somebody's idea. It is rather a misnomer to call all this literature

religious, for it is all either philosophy or poetry. Religious truths have a realm of their own, and unless every one who claims a vision of these truths has had actual access into this realm, his pretended vision must be set down as a self-delusion.

Much of the modern confusion and obscuratization in religious life, much of the conflict of views and theories, much of the doubt and uncertainty about the individual's bearings in spiritual endeavour, would surely disappear, if once the only correct criterion of religious truth becomes acknowledged among men who want to practise religion, and in the simple dictum of Swami Vivekananda that religion is realisation lies this correct criterion. Religion is not something to be intellectualised, but something to be realised, and this realisation implies the total absorption of intellectual thought and feeling into some higher function of consciousness which only can reveal religious truths. The form of experience which we know as intellection correlated to a world of intellect, becomes dissolved into a higher form of experience in that intensified consciousness where religion becomes factual, just as in the intensity of heat one form of matter changes into another form of it. That higher realm of experience, therefore, where we become true to religion and religion becomes true to us as realisation, is not any realm superadded to the realm of ordinary sense and intellect. It is the transfiguration of the same existence as matter into the same existence as spirit, and this transfiguration takes place as our consciousness regains its own real intensity from a state of relaxation which materialises existence.

When a great poet or thinker stumbles upon the serenity of this intensifying consciousness, he generally catches, while still retaining his foothold on the realm of intellect, a glimpse of some supra-intellectual beauty or truth. But still he is but in the borderland of religion, and has no right to pass off his

visions as anything but poetry or philosophy. Still he cannot be accounted a seer of the spiritual, and should not speak with first-hand authority of religious truths.

For instance, seers of the spiritual extol the principle of renunciation, of freeing the mind from bondages of attachment to sense-objects, while many a modern thinker or poet condemn or ridicule the principle as tending to take away from the legitimate richness of life. How should a seeker after religion choose between these two conflicting dicta? Why, he must accept the religious truth, the truth which comes from religion, and not the other which is at best of poetical or philosophical origin. Not a single seer of the spiritual will be found in history to discourage by precept and example the true spirit of renunciation which sets the mind loose from its bonds of attachment so that it may lose itself fully in its God.

And yet when the poet sings: "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight," we enjoy the poetry of it, because when self-surrender in love, a disguised form of the very renunciation sought to be slighted and ignored, takes possession of the mind, the delights of sense can very little bind and entangle it as delights of sense, for they are all suffused and symbolised by the overflowing delight of love. So the feeling of giving oneself up in love,—the highest freedom of the soul, being its inmost essence,—leaves no scope for the binding effects of sense-enjoyment. And because love is thus felt to unbind the bonds of sense, the very exhilaration of the experience makes the poet cry out, "No, I will never shut the door of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch all bear thy delight." All this is, of course, good poetry of love, but good religion of love has been found in actual cases to rise irresistibly beyond all this distilled delight through sense and intellect,

beyond this mere bearing aloft of delight and love's message over a gulf that still endures, for religion is realisation and it cannot rest contented with the remoteness which intellect or sense can never abolish. So not in poetry of love, but in religion of love alone, the poet's feeling of delight which makes the so-called perils of sense and desire stingless and harmless, is further heightened to its consummation, where everything of sense and intellect is consumed by the ineffable intensity of delight. There really "All the illusions burn into illumination of joy." But this very consummation is still the fruition of renunciation which the poet begins with scorning, for there is only insignificant difference on the mere surface, psychologically speaking, between the lover's renunciation by self-surrender in love and the Jnani's renunciation of the unreal for the sake of the real.

Religion, therefore, gives us the whole truth, the unalloyed truth, while poetry or philosophy loves to revel in compromises. Religion spiritualises the human consciousness, so that, exalted, it may drink deep of the spiritual as the spiritual. Poetry or philosophy intellectualises the spiritual so that this shining alloy of beauty or truth may be enjoyed by intellectual feeling or thought.

But religion is religion; it cannot lend itself to being distilled or whittled into poetry or philosophy. Its truths are inalienably its own, and yield themselves up only to that religious consciousness which transcends mere intellect and sentiment. The realm of religious truths, therefore, lies beyond the merely intellectual thought and feeling with their correlative of a world of sense and intellect. The Vedic seers of religious truth declared: **आनन्दाद्धेव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति—** It is from Bliss that all this world proceeds, it is by Bliss that it lives and it is to Bliss that it is resolved back in dissolution. This truth, for instance, is a truth of religion, and

can never be properly understood by intellect or sentiment. For the intellect cannot but think of the cause as something different from the effect as it has to relate the one to the other in thought. So the intellect conceives of the Causal Bliss and its world-effect as two different entities, the latter coming out of the former in creation and going back into it again in dissolution. This conception of a religious truth to which the intellect, conditioned by its peculiar forms of thought, is committed, gives rise to irreconcilable antinomies, but all the same much poetry and philosophy are everywhere found to cut delicious capers round this intellectual conception of the Causal Bliss related to its world-effect. Whereas the real truth of this Vedic declaration becomes revealed only to the religious consciousness which actually *realises* how the world-effect resolves itself back to Causal Bliss. And the man to whom

this realisation comes carries the truth of his vision with himself to the plane of sense and intellect, and when he says that all things are made up of Bliss, his statement has a deeper and truer significance than anything in the same line which poetry sings or philosophy argues can ever bear for men. It is of the utmost importance for all of us who value sincerity in religious life to recognise this momentous and inevitable difference between how religion states its truths and how mere poetry or philosophy seeks to echo them in their own terms. And what a lot of confusion and conflict in religious ideals modern men would have surely been spared, had poetry and philosophy confined themselves with but legitimate modesty to the mere *echoing* of religious truths, instead of assuming and accepting for themselves the proud, impossible pretensions of *discovering* them!

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

CXXVIII.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna !

Ghazipur,
2nd April, 1890.

My dear K—

Glad to receive your letter as well as Pramada Babu's and B—'s. I am doing pretty well here. You have expressed a desire to see me. I too have a similar longing, and it is this that makes me afraid of going. Moreover, the Babaji forbids me to do so. I shall try to go on a few days' leave from him. But there is this fear that by so doing I shall be drawn up to the hills by the

attraction I have for Hrishikesh, and it will be very difficult to shake it off, specially for one weak-minded, you see, like myself. The attack of lumbago, too, will not leave me on any account—a botheration! But then I am getting used to it. Please convey my countless salutations to Pramada Babu; his is a friendship which greatly benefits both my mind and body. And I am particularly indebted to him. Things will turn up some way, anyhow.

With best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

CXXIX.

(Written to a Bengali lady-disciple, just before
proceeding to America.)

Bombay,
24th May, 1893.

Dear mother,

Very glad to receive your letter and that of dear Haripada. Please be not sorry that I could not write to you very often. I am always praying to the Lord for your welfare. I cannot go to Belgaum now as arrangements are all ready for my starting for America on the 31st next. The Lord willing, I shall see you on returning from my travels in America and Europe. Always resign yourselves to Lord Sri Krishna. Always remember that we are but puppets in the Lord's hands. Remain pure always. Please take care not to become impure even in thought, as in speech and action; always try to do good to others as far as in you lies. And remember that the paramount duty of a woman is to serve her husband by thought, word and deed. Please read the Gita everyday to the best of your opportunity. Why have you signed yourself as...*Dasi*? The Vaisya and the Sudra should sign as *Dasa* and *Dasi*, but the Brahmana and Kshatriya should write *Deva* and *Devi*. Moreover, these distinctions of caste and the like have been the invention of our modern sapient Brahmanas. Who is a servant, and to whom? Everyone is a servant of the Lord Hari. Hence a woman should use her patronymic, that is, the surname of her husband. This is the ancient Vedic custom, as for example, such and such *Mitra*, or the like. It is needless to write much, dear Mother; always know that I am constantly praying for your well-being. From America I shall now and then write to you letters with descriptions of the wonderful things there. I am now at Bombay, and shall stay here up to the 31st. The Private Secretary to the Maharaja of

Khetri has come here to see me off.
With blessings,
Yours sincerely,
Vivekananda.

CXXX.

(Written to Babu Haripada Mitra, Forest
Officer, Sholapur.)

C/o George W. Hale,
541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago.

Dear and Beloved,

Received your letter yesterday. I am delighted to find that you remember me. It is passing strange that the Chicago affairs have got their way into the Indian newspapers, for I try my best to keep my movements from getting publicity. There are many wonderful things in this country. Particularly, poverty is almost absent here, and nowhere have I seen women like those of this country. There are plenty of good men in our country too, but we have very few women like those of this country. या श्रीः स्वयं सुकृतीनां भवनेषु—The Goddess who is Herself present in the homes of the fortunate as Lakshmi—this is literally true. I have seen here women by the thousands who are white like the snow of this country. And how free they are! It is they who do everything. Schools and colleges are full of women. But in our unfortunate country women cannot walk out of doors with safety to their modesty. And how kind they are! Ever since I came here, the American women have been accommodating me in their homes and feeding me—they arrange everything for my lectures, take me to the shops with them,—in fact, I cannot say what help they do not render. I shall not be able to repay my debt of gratitude to them even if I serve them for hundreds of lives.

My son, do you know what the word *Sakta* means? It does not mean indulging in intoxicants like wine or *bhong*. It means one who knows God to be the Supreme Power immanent in the universe, and sees the manifestation of the Supreme Power throughout

womankind. The Americans see like that. And our Manu has said, यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते तत्र देवताः—Where women are held in esteem, there the gods are delighted,—upon that family God showers His blessings. That is what these people do. And therefore they are happy, learned, free and energetic. We, on the other hand, look upon women as low, degraded, despicable and impure. And the result is that we are beasts, slaves, devoid of energy, and poor.

Oh, what shall I say of the wealth of this country! There is no other nation on earth so wealthy as these people. True, that the English also are rich, but they have got lots of poor men also. You can scarcely find a poor man here. You have to pay rupees six per day, besides food and clothing, if you want to have a servant. In England it is one rupee per diem. A coolie would not work below six rupees a day. But the expenses are proportionate, too. You cannot get a common cigar for less than four annas. A lasting pair of shoes costs you Rs. 24. As are their earnings, so are their spendings. But they *are* as ready to spend as to earn.

And how pure are their women! None are married below the age of twenty-five or thirty. And they are free like the birds of the air. Marketing, getting a living, managing shops, attending colleges, doing the Professor's work,—everything they do, yet how pure! Those that are rich are day and night busy helping the poor. And what do we do? Our girls must be married at the age of eleven, or they will become corrupt! Are we men, my dear? Manu says, कन्याप्येवं पालनीया शिष्यायातिव्रतः—The daughter too should be thus brought up and educated with the utmost care. As the boys will have to live a Brahmacharin's life up to the thirtieth year and have education, so shall the girls also also have to do. But what are we doing? Can you raise the status of your women? Then there is some hope. Otherwise your beastly existence will never be at an end.

Next come the poor. If, in our country, anyone is born in a low caste, there! he has no more chances, he is gone. Why, forsooth? What an oppression! In this country everyone has hopes, has something to stand upon, has opportunities. He who is poor to-day, will to-morrow be rich, be learned, and will be honoured by the whole world. And all are eager to help the poor. The Indian has the average monthly income of Rs. 2. In India they are all crying that they are desperately poor, but how many societies are there to help the poor? How many men are weeping in their hearts for the destitute millions? Good God! Are we men! The *Hâdis* and *Dôms* and other classes who are leading their beastly existences around your homes,—can you tell me what you have done to improve their condition, to give them a morsel of food? You do not touch them, always keep them at arm's length, with the most unkind treatment. Are we men! And those thousands of Sadhus and Brahmins whom you find sauntering amongst you, what are they doing for these degraded, poor, and down-trodden masses? Simply saying, don't touch me, don't touch me! To what a degraded state have they reduced the Religion Eternal! Where is religion now? Only don't-touchism,—don't touch me, don't touch me—that is all!

I have come to this country not for sight-seeing, not for enjoying amusements, nor for making a name, but to find a way out for these poor. What that way is, you will come to know later on, if the Lord be propitious.

These people have got many weak points too. The long and short of it is that as regards religion they are far below us, but in social ideal they are far superior to us. We shall take up their social ideal and shall teach them our wonderful religion.

I do not know when I shall return home, the Lord's Will is paramount. Accept all of you my blessings.

Yours sincerely,

Vivekananda.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI.

[Scarcely any introduction is needed for a book that professes to be, as its title—'Crest-jewel of Discrimination'—shows, a masterpiece on Advaita Vedānta, the cardinal tenet of which is: ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः—'Brahman alone is real, the universe is unreal and the individual soul is no other than the Universal Soul.' Being an original production of Sankara's genius, the book combines with a searching analysis of our experience a depth of sincerity that at once carries conviction into the minds of its readers. The whole book is instinct with the prophetic vision of a Seer, a man of Realisation, and the expression, too, is so lucid and highly poetical that quite a new life has been breathed into the dry bones of philosophical discussion, and that, too, on the most abstruse subject ever known. Without further preface we leave the readers to taste the thing for themselves.]

सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तगोचरं तमगोचरम् ।

गोविन्दं परमानन्दं सद्गुरुं प्रणतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥१॥

I. I bow to Govinda, whose nature is Bliss Supreme, who is the Sadguru, who can be known only from the import of all Vedānta, and who is beyond the reach of speech and mind.

['Viveka' means discrimination, 'Chudā' is crest, and 'Mani,' jewel. Hence the title means 'Crest-jewel of discrimination.' Just as the jewel on the crest of a diadem is the most conspicuous ornament on a person's body, so the present treatise is a masterpiece among works treating of discrimination between the Real and the unreal.

In this opening stanza salutation is made to God (Govinda), or to the Guru, in his absolute aspect. It may be interesting to note that the name of Sankara's Guru was Govindapada, and the Sloka is ingeniously composed so as to admit of both interpretations.

Sadguru—lit. the highly qualified preceptor, and may refer either to Sankara's own Guru or to God Himself, who is the Guru of Gurus.]

जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता
तस्माद्वैदिकधर्ममार्गपरता विद्वत्त्वमस्मात्परम् ।
आत्मानात्मविवेचनं खलु भवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थिति-
मुक्तिर्नो शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते २

2. For all beings a human birth is difficult to obtain, more so is a male body, rarer than that is Brahminhood, rarer still is

the attachment to the path of Vedic religion; higher than this is erudition in the Scriptures; discrimination between the Self and not-Self, Realisation, and continuing in a state of identity with Brahman,—these come next in order. (This kind of) Mukti is not to be attained except through the well-earned merits of a hundred crore of births.

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥३॥

3. There are three things which are rare indeed and are due to the grace of God—namely, a human birth, the longing for Liberation, and the protecting care of a perfected sage.

लब्ध्वा कथंचिन्नरजन्म दुर्लभं

तत्रापि पुंस्त्वं श्रुतिपारदर्शनम् ।

यस्त्वात्ममुक्तौ न यतते मूढधीः

स ह्यात्महा खं विनिहत्यसद्ब्रह्मात् ॥४॥

4. The man who having by some means obtained a human birth, with a male body and mastery of the Vedas to boot, is foolish enough not to exert for self-liberation, verily commits suicide, for he kills himself by clinging to things unreal.

इतः को न्वस्ति मूढात्मा यस्तु स्वार्थे प्रमाद्यति ।

दुर्लभं मानुषं देहं प्राप्य तत्रापि पौलवम् ॥५॥

5. What greater fool is there than the man who having obtained a rare human body,

and a masculine body too, neglects to achieve the real end of this life.

[*The real end &c.*—viz. Liberation.]

वदन्तु शास्त्राणि यजन्तु देवान्

कुर्वन्तु कर्माणि भजन्तु देवताः ।

आत्मैक्यबोधेन विनापि मुक्ति-

र्न सिद्ध्यति ब्रह्मशतान्तरेऽपि ॥६॥

6. Let people quote scriptures and sacrifice to the gods, let them perform rituals and worship the deities, there is no Liberation for anyone without the realisation of one's identity with the Atman, no, not even in the lifetime of a hundred Brahmās put together.

[*Lifetime &c.*—i. e., an indefinite length of time. One *day* of Brahmā (the Creator) is equivalent to 432 million years of human computation, which is supposed to be the duration of the world.]

अमृतत्वस्य नाशस्ति वित्तेनेत्येव हि श्रुतिः ।

ब्रवीति कर्मणो मुक्तेरहेतुत्वं स्फुटं यतः ॥७॥

7. There is no hope of Immortality by means of riches—such indeed is the declaration of the Vedas. Hence it is clear that works cannot be the cause of Liberation.

[The reference is to Yājñavalkya's words to his wife Maitreyi, Bṛhadāraṇyaka II. iv. 2. Cf. the Vedic dictum. न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानयुः—'Neither by rituals, nor progeny, nor by riches, but by renunciation alone some attained immortality.]

अतो विमुक्त्यै प्रयतेत विद्वान्

संन्यस्तयाग्यार्थसुखस्पृहः सन् ।

सन्तं महान्तं समुपेत्य देशिकं

तेनोपदिष्टार्थसमाहितात्मा ॥८॥

8. Therefore the man of learning should strive his best for Liberation, having renounced his desire for pleasures from external objects, duly approaching a good and generous preceptor, and fixing his mind on the truth inculcated by him.

[*Duly*—i. e. according to the prescribed mode. (Vide Mundaka I. ii. 12). The characteristics of a qualified Guru are given later on in sloka 33.]

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं मग्नं संसारवारिधौ ।

योगारूढत्वमासाद्य सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठया ॥९॥

9. Having attained the Yogārūḍha state, one should recover oneself, immersed in the sea of birth and death, by means of devotion to right discrimination.

[*Yogārūḍha state*—Described in Gita VI. 4.—"When one is attached neither to sense-objects nor to actions, and has given up all desires, then he is said to be *Yogārūḍha* or to have ascended the Yoga-path."]

संन्यस्य सर्वकर्माणि भवबन्धविमुक्तये ।

यत्प्रतापं परिहृतैर्धैरैरात्माभ्यास उपस्थितैः ॥१०॥

10. Let the wise and erudite man, having commenced the practice of the realisation of the Atman, give up all works and try to cut loose the bonds of birth and death.

[*All works*—only *Sakāma-Karma* or works performed with a view to gaining more sense-enjoyment are meant, not selfless work.]

चित्तस्य शुद्धये कर्म न तु वस्तूपलब्धये ।

वस्तुसिद्धिर्विचारेण न किञ्चित्कर्मकोटिभिः ॥११॥

11. Work is for the purification of the mind, not for the perception of the reality. The realisation of Truth is brought about by discrimination and not in the least by ten millions of acts.

[The idea is, that works properly done cleanse the mind of its impurities, when the Truth flashes of itself.]

सम्यग्विचारतः सिद्धा रज्जुतत्त्वावधारणा ।

भ्रान्तोदितमहासर्पभयदुःखविनाशिनी ॥१२॥

12. By adequate reasoning the conviction of the reality about the rope is gained, which puts an end to the great fear and misery caused by the snake worked up in the deluded mind.

[*Reality of the rope*—i. e. that it is a rope and not a snake, for which it was mistaken.]

अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तिः ।
न ज्ञानेन न दानेन प्राणायामशतेन वा ॥१३॥

13. The conviction of the Truth is seen to proceed from reasoning upon the salutary counsel of the wise, and not by bathing in the sacred waters, nor by gifts, nor by hundreds of Pranayamas.

[The wise—men of realisation.]

अधिकारिणमाशस्ते फलसिद्धिर्विशेषतः ।
उपाया देशकालाद्याः सन्त्यस्मिन्सहकारिणः ॥१४॥

14. Success depends essentially on a qualified aspirant, and time, place and such other means are but auxiliaries in this regard.

[The qualifications will be enumerated in stanzas 16 and 17.]

अतो विचारः कर्तव्यो जिज्ञासोरात्मवस्तुतः ।
समासाद्य दयासिन्धुं गुरुं ब्रह्माविदुत्तमम् ॥१५॥

15. Hence the seeker after the Reality of the Atman should take to reasoning, after duly approaching the Guru—who should be the best of the knowers of Brahman, and an ocean of mercy.

मेधावी पुरुषो विद्वानूहापोहविचक्षणः ।
अधिकार्यात्मविद्यायामुक्तलक्षणलक्षितः ॥१६॥

16. The intelligent and learned man skilled in arguing in favour of the Scriptures and refuting counter-arguments against them,

—one who has got the above characteristics is the fit recipient of the knowledge of the Atman.

विधेकिनो धिरक्तस्य शमादिगुणशालिनः ।
मुमुक्षोरेष हि ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायोग्यता मता ॥१७॥

17. The man of discrimination between the Real and the unreal, whose mind is turned away from the unreal, who possesses calmness and the allied virtues, and is longing for Liberation, is alone considered qualified to inquire after Brahman.

साधनान्यत्र चत्वारि कथितानि मनीषिभिः ।
येषु सत्स्वेव सन्निष्ठा यदभावे न सिद्ध्यति ॥१८॥

18. Regarding this, sages has spoken of four means of attainment, which alone being present, the devotion to Brahman succeeds, and in the absence of which, it fails.

आदौ नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः परिगण्यते ।
इदामुत्रफलभोगविरागस्तदनन्तरम् ।
शमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिर्मुमुक्षुत्वमिति स्फुटम् ॥१९॥

19. First is enumerated the discrimination between the Real and the unreal, next comes the aversion to the enjoyment of fruits (of one's actions) here and hereafter, (next is) the group of six attributes, viz., calmness and the rest, and (last) is clearly the yearning for Liberation.

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

The unobserved observer in the conning tower of moving events on the waters of life is asked to write something for the P. B. of the first month of the

**"Give the People
Back
Their Own."**

new year. He agrees, and looking about, sorts out a little book of 45 pages from among a mass of kindred literature, all seeking to formulate in a curious diversity of ways the Indian political demand for the benefit of the Rt.

Hon'ble Mr. Montagu's study of the problem on the spot!

This brochure, "Give the People back Their Own," was, however, produced from the pen of the author before the Rt. Hon'ble the Secretary of State disembarked on our shores, but the writing is cast in the form of "an open letter to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India." So I have classified it with the newly, and

feverishly, created literature in India, of deputations and political schemes of reform. Its writer is Pramatha Nath Bose Esq., B. Sc. (Lond.), the well-known author of "The Illusions of New India" and other thoughtful books. It has been published by Messrs. W. Newman & Co. of 4, Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, and priced at Twelve Annas. We would very much like this book to be read by everyone in India whose mind is working now at possible schemes for her political advancement.

In the first place, the title of this pamphlet is striking to a degree, for it implies that for the well-being of the Indian people, what we are required to do is simply to have their own old political institution restored to them, instead of thrusting on them any new, imported ones. What this political institution of their own is, the author explains in the very third paragraph of his book. It is the village self-government of pre-British times. It is not necessary now-a-days to dilate much upon this theme of rural self-government, for so far as we can infer from the importance that is being generally attached to the revival of the village in India, it is evident that most of our thoughtful political leaders would endorse the view of the author that "from time immemorial, the village has been the soul of India, and until the establishment of the British Rule enjoyed a very large measure of self-government." We may go further and say that in the best of schemes for political reconstruction, emanating from the most representative of to-day's Congressmen in India, village self-government has been allotted a place of as much central importance as Babu Pramatha Nath Bose has succeeded in attaching to it in his own scheme in this book. But yet the question is whether this measure of importance attached in theory would suffice really to restore in practice the old village polity of India?

Our reply is, no. Because all the political schemes yet to hand propose to have village self-government created and maintained by political legislation. For instance, Babu Pramatha Nath Bose appeals to the Government to "give back to the people their own," by which he obviously means that village *panchayats* or councils should

be re-established by proper Government legislation. Of course, he seeks to safeguard and protect the reality of such village self-government by a system of popular representation which is to extend up to the Legislative Councils. But having himself argued very strongly in his book with ample illustration how it is impossible to project self-government into a village from above as the last link of a system of centralised political administration, of all makers of schemes he at least ought to have discovered the vital truth that the old village polity of India never received from state-legislation either the inspiration of its being or the sustained impetus of its life; it might have received simply the political sanction of the state, but the very reality and substance of the institution consisted in its being self-created, created out of the *dharma* of the village. There is a world of difference between the spirit of getting people to do their duty by the compulsion of law and the spirit of making them do it through their sense of *dharma*, and the former spirit can never be compatible with the old polity of village life in India, the system of having the village governed *from within*, the ancient seminary of all democratic evolutions in the world's history.

Towards the close of this bright little book, Babu Pramatha Nath Bose says, "One of the most important lessons which history teaches is, that civilisations whose soul lay in large commercial cities have been of a more or less ephemeral character. Babylon, Athens and Rome are conspicuous examples of such civilisations. The only two of the ancient civilisations which have survived to the present day are the Chinese and the Indian whose soul lay in the village. * * 'Back to land' is, therefore, the right note of reform which has been struck by some of the most earnest and thoughtful English reformers of the present day." But how can the soul of a country lie in the village, if everything the village has to do towards national good comes determined from the legislatures of the big cities? The village must have the self-discipline and the training as of old to work out on its own initiative through the sense of its *dharma* the material, mental and spiritual bases of the whole national life. It is then only that the country will have its soul preserved for ever in the village, the

most lasting of all the strongholds of collective human existence. Some of the wisest schemes now mooted all over our country make the revival of the village under the *panchayet* system the very unit of the whole constructive work, but those who intimately know the present disorganised condition of most of the villages will fully admit that no factor or force, of the nature of legislative coercion or of occasional exhortations by visiting townsmen, would be equal now to the task of infusing into the moribund rural life the old unselfish enthusiasm for the Common Good.

Without this intrinsic enthusiasm for the common good, a *real* village *panchayet* can never be formed, though many may be planned on paper. We have seen wraiths of village *panchayets* conjured up by the wand of law; we have seen their worthless travesties enacted in villages placed under Government-appointed *pradhans*. The present literary production of Babu Pramatha Nath

Bose calls pointed attention to such cases. So the real vital question is as to how to inspire the village in India with the old profound enthusiasm for the common good. If this question is not first solved, some of the most prominent schemes of political reconstruction in India fall to the ground at once. For in India all the various spheres of national effort and work, agriculture, industries, education, sanitation, administration of justice and so on, ultimately pivot themselves on the dutiful villager. If this dutiful villager does not come forth before us out of his own enthusiasm, no scheme devised for our real national life can ever have any reality and substance imparted to it. Will this great centre of Indian life, this dutiful villager, be ever the creation of your laws? Impossible. He will be for ever the child of *dharma*, and only a new spiritual force sweeping all over the country can bring him forth as the weaver of a new web of national life more glorious than any we ever had before in our history.

—O—

REVIEWS.

1. *Bharati Shakti*: Collection of Addresses on Indian Culture by Sir John Woodroffe; compiled by Nolini Mohan Chatterji; publisher, S. C. Chowdhury, 29, Kalidas Singh Lane, Calcutta; price, annas 5.

In giving his consent to the compiler to print these speeches of his, delivered on different occasions mostly during the last two years, the Hon'ble Justice Sir John G. Woodroffe makes some valuable introductory remarks than which, we suppose, no better expression can be given to the useful purpose which this little book is calculated to serve towards the reconstruction of Indian life and thought. We quote, therefore, the whole of these remarks below:

"I shall be glad if it be the fact that any words of mine help, in however small a degree, to stem those movements which work for the *cultural conquest* of this country, and which having unfortunately done much in past years, are likely under certain circumstances and in the absence of right resistance, to acquire greater vigour after the war. This cultural question is of equal importance

with the purely political one, now receiving so much public attention. I cannot discuss this last, but it is open to me to say that if Indian political efforts can rightly secure Home Rule, it is only a successful cultural defence, which will provide a Home to rule.

"India is not a mere geographical expression nor a mere congeries of people, who happen to be on this particular part of the earth's surface, but who might as well have been elsewhere. India is an Idea. It is a particular Shakti, the Bharati Shakti, distinguished from all others by Her own peculiar nature and qualities. No Home is a truly Indian Home which is not Her expression. The basis of all culture and the maker of all nationality is Religion. This is the root and trunk of the great Tree of Life with many branches, amongst which the chief are those of Philosophy and Art, of Knowledge and Beauty. May the great and wonderful antique life of India be re-born in the forms of to-day."

The whole of the booklet is studded with shining gems of thought which make ample

amends for its smallness of size, and even in putting up a newspaper notice for it, one feels strongly tempted to present others with some of these passages of thrilling insight into truth rather than round up the commonplace appreciation with the usual platitudes of praise. In the first Address compiled, for example, occurs the following statement of a truth of which very few of our scholars have taken the fullest cognizance: "This land is not dead. On the contrary it has survived all the great Empires, save that of China, which were its contemporaries in past ages. Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Greece and Rome live only in their influence upon the civilisations which succeeded them. India is yet alive, though not fully awake to-day. It is precisely because it is a living force that it provokes antagonism from those who dislike or fear its culture. Does any one now fume against or ridicule the life or morals of Egypt or Babylon? They and other past civilisations are left as things which are dead and gone to the scientific dissection of the cool historian. But when touching India even scholars cannot be impartial. Why? Because India is not the mere subject of academical talk, but is a living force. India is still feared where she is not loved. Why again? Precisely because she lives. Because she is still potentially powerful to impose her ideas upon the world. She is still an antagonist to be reckoned with in the conflict of cultures. Why has she with her civilisation so unique, so different from any other of East or West been preserved? India lives because of the world purpose which she has to fulfil, because the world will be enriched by what she can give to it."

This sterling faith in the profound individuality of India, in the glorious future that she is bound to work out for herself, in the great mission she is to fulfil in the world, animates every word spoken in the addresses compiled in this book. We cannot, in fact, overestimate the necessity of every student of India, of every worker in her cause, furnishing himself with a copy of this compilation, and it is our ardent wish that the great exponent and analyser of the wonderful Tantrik lore of India would more often make time to come forward, as in these addresses, to contribute his weighty ideas to the keen intellectual struggle going on in our country round practical problems of re-organising our life and thought.

2. *The Life of the Swami Vivekananda*: श्रीमत् परमहंस स्वामी विवेकानन्द यांचे चरित्र। Compiled and Translated into Marathi by Pundits Vaskar Vishnu Phadake and Ramkrishna Vasudev Varve. Published in parts, three being already out. Price, each part, cloth-bound Re. 1-2 as., paper-bound annas 14.

We have great pleasure in heartily recommending to the Marathi-reading public these Marathi publications of Pt. V. V. Phadake, B. A., which deal very exhaustively and in an attractive style with the life of Swami Vivekananda. The enterprising translators are fully qualified by their learning and their mastery of the languages concerned for the noble task they have undertaken, and we hope the good wishes they have earned of the whole monastic brotherhood founded by Swami Vivekananda will prove an earnest of the success they amply deserve in their undertaking. We invite all lovers of the Marathi literature, all seekers among our Marathi countrymen of religious truth and of the truth about India's mission in the world and her foundations in national life, to extend their best encouragement to this publishing enterprise which proposes to give to Marathi readers in their own vernacular all the best literature created out of the movement inaugurated in the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Applications for registration of names as subscribers to this valuable series of Marathi publications are to be made to Pundit Vaskar Vishnu Phadake, B. A., Ramatirtha Karyalaya, 7 Sadashiv Street, Girgaon, Bombay.

3. *The Rt. Hon. Mr. E. S. Montagu on Indian Affairs*: With Foreword by Dr. Sir S. Subramanya Aiyar; (with two small portraits of these worthies); published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Price Re. 1-8-0, over 450 pages, D. C. 16 mo.

This compilation of 17 speeches of the present Secretary of State for India is no doubt a timely publication whose value and interest are indeed very much enhanced by the fact that the Rt. Hon'ble gentleman is now in our midst to receive deputations from the country on schemes of political reform. Educated people here would naturally like to understand the nature of that liberalism and the type of mind which will be brought to bear upon all the materials furnished mainly through

these deputations. And specially as the exigencies of his task and position in the important matter which has eventuated in his welcome presence in our midst are found to involve, to a somewhat unexpected degree, the necessity of his collecting, with sealed lips, all the data he requires from us, this very circumstance, it is plausible to believe, will serve to increase the sale of a book which presents to its readers the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Montagu in anything but an uncommunicative mood of mind. The illuminating foreword from the pen of the veteran leader of Indian political thought succeeds well in accentuating a suspense for which a favourable termination some day is the hope, however, which the contents of the book will be found to inspire.

4. *India's Claim for Home Rule*: Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., 39, Thambu Chetty St., Madras. Price Rs. 2.

This is a handy volume of a little more than 500 pages,—size, D. C. 16 mo.—tastefully got-up, comprising “The speeches and writings of most of the eminent men both Indian and European, expounding with sound arguments ‘India's Claim for Home Rule.’” The views in this matter of 46 renowned public men are compiled and presented in their own words, and an Appendix is added containing valuable documents such as the Memorandum of the Nineteen, the Scheme of the Congress and the Moslem League and so on. The Introduction to the volume written by Mr. K. Vyasa Rao shows how Home Rule is only “a new name for an old demand,” and describes graphically the circumstances which have been of late leading up to the authoritative presentation of this demand before the representative of the British cabinet who has come over to India to enquire locally into the real situation and its needs. This Introduction, besides establishing conclusively the strength of weighty opinions in favour of the Indian claim, bristles with important political informations and arguments which would prove of great value to the political worker. The whole volume in fact will be really “helpful,” as Dr. Sir Subramanya Aiyar bears testimony, “to every member of the (Home Rule) league in the discharge of his self-imposed task for the Motherland.” And we may add that the book will amply repay

persual of it by every worker in India's cause, devoted to the noble aim of saving India from the blind superimposition of a political system which can never reflect through its untoward methods and principles the development of the life of her people on their own national lines.

5. *India for Indians*: by C. R. Das., Bar-at-Law, with Foreword by Babu Motilal Ghosh, Editor, “A. B. Patrika”; Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co. Price As. 12.

This is a collection of speeches delivered by Mr. C. R. Das on Home Rule for India “wherein,” as the compilers rightly describe it, “he has also tellingly exposed the fallacy of Anglo-Indian agitation against Indian aspirations.” The speeches undoubtedly deserve to be preserved and widely read, and the enterprising firm of Messrs. Ganesh & Co., with their keen eye for the needs of workers in the political field, has done them really good service by giving these speeches a place in permanent literature. Babu Motilal Ghosh's Foreword besides giving a short biographical sketch of this great champion of India's cause and glory, offers a good justification of this enterprise on the part of the Madras firm in the following remarks: “Mr. C. R. Das, though yet young, is already an esteemed and prominent leader of Bengal. His patriotism is genuine; his abilities are unquestioned. Self-seeking is not in his line. He tries to serve his motherland according to his light, not for his own aggrandisement but for her welfare alone. He is above official frowns and favours, his independence is fearless. He is not a pushing man, yet his talent has pushed him forward to a foremost place both in his profession and the political field.”

6. *New Ways in English Literature*: By James H. Cousins; published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras, D. C. 16 mo. Pp. 144, price Re. 1/-

We heartily recommend this pretty little volume to every student of English literature who loves to enjoy first-class literary criticism. These brief essays on the achievements of some of the leading contemporary and recent poets in the English language, including Rabindranath Tagore, Aru-binda Ghosh, Yeats A. E., Stephen Phillips, Carpenter, Meredith, Austin, Emerson and J. M. Synge,

seek faithfully to mirror that vital sentiment in each which serves to spiritualise their poetic perceptions, and the task is done in such an attractive literary style that something like a hankering is left in the mind that more was not given of each poet in the same happy, enjoyable strain. We highly congratulate the publishers on this excellent publication they have been able to put in the market.

7. *The Kingdom of Youth*: By James H. Cousins; publishers, Ganesh & Co. of Madras; D. C. 16 mo. Pp. 67, price 8 as.

This is a collection of six essays written by the same brilliant author embodying some deeper thoughts and higher principles that should inspire a system of national education. The writer's experience in this line, as the vice-principal of the Theosophical College, Madanapalle, imparts to his lofty sentiments much value and weight, and his attempt to call attention to the deeper and subtler aspect of true educational efforts ought to influence the outlook of those who are called upon to tackle the problem at present in our country. It is noteworthy that Mr. Cousins is going to bring out shortly a 'detailed study of the whole problem of national education.'

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda's fifty-sixth birthday comes off on the 3rd February, 1918, which this year is a Sunday. The religious rites of the occasion as well as the public celebration take place on that date, at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, the headquarters of the Rk. Mission. Whether the *Tithipuja* and the public festival in the Branch Centres of the Mission take place on the same Sunday or on two successive Sundays, will depend upon convenience. Gentlemen wishing to have reports of the same published in the P. B. will kindly send them immediately after the festivities are over.

THE 83rd. anniversary (*Tithipuja*) of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna will be observed at the Belur Math and its branches on Thursday the 14th of March, 1918. The public celebration will take place on Sunday following, that is, on March 17. Reports

of the festival may kindly be sent to our office for publication as early as possible. Belated reports often cause us great inconvenience.

WE are glad to announce that the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad, is going to start a local relief centre on the Ganges-side during the ensuing Kumbha Mela in January. The object of the centre will be, among others, to afford medical aid and nursing to the sick and diseased, who are by no means rare in an assemblage of several lakhs of pilgrims from different parts of India. Contributions in the shape of money or medicines etc. towards this work of service will be gratefully accepted by Brahmachari Panchanan, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, Muthigunge, Allahabad.

THE R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, treated during the month of November 1917, 54 indoor cases, of which 30 were discharged cured, 7 died, 1 left treatment and 16 were still under treatment. It also treated 554 new outdoor cases during the same period. The total receipts of the Ashrama during this month amounted to Rs. 123-14-0, and the total expenses Rs. 560-7-9, including Rs. 255-1-6 for building-work.

ALARMING reports of a heavy flood devastating parts of Bhartpur State, and Gurgaon and Muttra Districts have led the authorities of the R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, to open relief centres in the affected areas, to supplement the efforts of the Govt. travelling dispensary, which is too inadequate to cope with the situation. Not only is a length of fifty miles under water, thereby causing the greatest insecurity to life and property, but the drinking water reservoirs are also contaminated by carcasses of animals having got their way into them. The result has been that besides the danger to crops and habitation, people have become a prey to various kinds of disease, often pestilential in character. The reports of the workers are heart-rending in their description of the extremely miserable condition of the people. Prompt co-operation of all generous-minded people is earnestly solicited by the Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra, who will thankfully accept all contributions of money, medicines, clothing, foodstuffs etc. in aid of the sufferers.